

**To:** foneil@sjbhd.org[foneil@sjbhd.org]  
**From:** Mylott, Richard  
**Sent:** Thur 8/6/2015 3:11:05 PM  
**Subject:** FW: Silverton Mine Spill

**Flannery—will have an update soon. Thanks.!**

## **EPA Statement**

This morning at approximately 10:30 am, an EPA and State Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety team working to investigate and address contamination at the Gold King Mine in San Juan County, Colo. unexpectedly triggered a large release of mine waste water into the upper portions of Cement Creek. Initial estimates are that the release contained approximately 1M gallons of water that was held behind unconsolidated debris near an abandoned mine portal. There were several workers at the site at the time of the breach, all were unharmed.

The primary environmental concern is the pulse of contaminated water containing sediment and metals flowing as an orange-colored discharge downstream through Cement Creek and into the Animas River.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment has notified water users downstream of the release so they can take appropriate steps to turn off intakes until the contaminated water passes. The Town of Silverton does not take water out of the affected portions of Cement Creek. Due to current and longstanding water quality impairment associated with heavy metals there are no fish populations in the Cement Creek watershed and populations in the Animas River have historically been impaired for several miles downstream of Silverton. Over the next several days, EPA teams will be sampling and investigating downstream locations to confirm that the release has passed and poses no additional concerns for aquatic life or water users.

“This unfortunate incident underscores the very reason EPA and the State of Colorado are focused on addressing the environmental risks at abandoned mine sites,” said David Ostrander, director of EPA’s emergency response program in Denver. “We are thankful that the personnel working on this mine cleanup project were unharmed. EPA will be assessing downstream conditions to ensure any impacts and concerns are addressed, as necessary.”

**From:** Flannery O'Neil [mailto:foneil@sjbhd.org]  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 06, 2015 9:08 AM  
**To:** Mylott, Richard  
**Subject:** RE: Silverton Mine Spill

Hi Rich:

Please send me any info that you all have released thus far.

Thanks!

Flannery O'Neil, MPH

Health Planner and Communications Director

San Juan Basin Health Department

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**From:** Flannery O'Neil  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 6, 2015 8:08 AM  
**To:** [mylott.richard@epa.gov](mailto:mylott.richard@epa.gov)  
**Cc:** Claire Macpherson <[CMacpherson@sjbhd.org](mailto:CMacpherson@sjbhd.org)>; Liane Jollon <[LJollon@sjbhd.org](mailto:LJollon@sjbhd.org)>  
**Subject:** Silverton Mine Spill  
**Importance:** High

Hi Rich:

I understand EPA is lead on the spill from the mine near Silverton. We are very concerned that this spill

will be approaching the Durango area shortly and our river is very heavily recreated, especially this time of year. We feel that it is very important that we get information out to the public immediately regarding the safety of the water.

Please contact me as soon as you receive this message so that we can discuss your communication plan.

Thank you!

**Flannery O'Neil, MPH**

Health Planner and Communications Director

San Juan Basin Health Department

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